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NUMBER 158

PLANNING BEFORE
THE
SNOW FLIES

—towards increasing
winter work

2 MINUTES



of EMPLOYMENT FACTS

"2 Minutes of Employment Facts" is a brief digest prepared by the Information Branch, Federal Department of Labour, for busy people interested in current employment matters.

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Brief Employment Facts



PLANNING BEFORE THE SNOW FLIES

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR,
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unemployment. For some years now interest has been increasing in the subject of seasonal unemployment. Particularly during the past two years there has been an increasing amount of attention being given to the matter by both Government and industry.

It is now the policy of the Federal Government that everything possible will be done to arrange regular government contracts and undertakings so that they will have the maximum effect employment-wise during the winter months, and a Cabinet directive to this effect has been circulated to Government Departments and appropriate Government Agencies. Steps have already been taken by a number of departments to award contracts for new construction, maintenance and repairs so that the work on them may be carried out during the winter months. The procurement of materials and supplies, in some cases, has also been timed with the same object in view. Provincial and municipal governments are co-operating along the same lines.

Last winter, with the endorsement and co-operation of the major employer and labour organizations and several other national organizations, including many women's groups, and with liaison established with the appropriate provincial government departments, the Labour Department and National Employment Service, in conjunction with the National Employment Advisory Committee, organized for the first time in Canada a national program specifically designed to increase employment for those out of work because of seasonal factors.

It was realized from the outset that if the national publicity and educational efforts were to produce any tangible results individual communities would have to undertake co-ordinated efforts on their own behalf. In this the Local Employment Office and Local Employment Committee played leading roles. In varying degrees, every town and city where there was an employment office saw an attempt to increase winter job opportunities. In some centres community enthusiasm, co-operation and overall organization were remarkable and did produce results. One Ontario city of 31,000 reported their campaign produced more than 500 jobs within the first week and a half, in mid-winter at the normal peak of unemployment.

Encouraged by what in most instances were experimental efforts last year, the Federal Department of Labour and the National Employment Service plan to increase support for the efforts of local Employment Committees and Employment Offices during the coming

late fall and winter. They will again seek the help of appropriate organizations and individual employers, all of whom in one way or another have an interest in increasing the level of employment and the resulting increase in purchasing power.

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Inside renovation, decoration, maintenance and general clean-up could be increased in homes, offices and plants this winter if enough publicity were given to the idea of doing this work during the winter months. The Government's efforts already being planned in this regard must necessarily be limited, and what will be done must be considered only a kick-off to what is hoped will be broad support by business and industry to educate all Canadians to not put off to spring what can be done in the winter, not forgetting that they (business and industry) are themselves large consumers of the goods and services in question.

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One of the most encouraging features of last winter's campaign was the extent to which many individual employers gave evidence of understanding their vital position in relationship to this promotional program. In many localities, local merchants and distributors modified their regular advertising to support the theme "Why Wait For Spring—Do It Now". By including in their radio, television, newspaper and magazine advertising, references to this theme, both national and local advertisers could materially help themselves, and at the same time help to combat seasonal unemployment this coming winter.

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In the matter of outside winter construction, the problem is more complex, but here again it is the opinion of many construction authorities that more is possible in Canada. To this end, a "Construction Industry Study Group" is now in the process of being formed, with representation from the Canadian Construction Association, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, the National House Builders' Association and the National Labour Congresses.

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Last winter evidence reached the Department of Labour of organizations undertaking large building projects in the cold months with the stated intention of enhancing the employment picture in the communities involved. Should this trend develop, the results could be remarkably good. However, it is evident that planning is the key to successful winter building, particularly that planning which is done long before the snow flies.



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